#9 IN A TWELVE-ISSUE LIMITED SERIES

MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ SECRET WARS™

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Transported to a strange planet by a force from beyond the universe, the mightiest Super Heroes and Super-Villains of all have been gathered to fight the ultimate war! After many epic battles, in a final, savage conflict, the villainous forces of *Doctor Doom* were utterly defeated, and have been imprisoned by the Super Heroes under the command of *Captain America*. *Now, however, a still greater test awaits those heroes and their tenuous allies, the X-Men* and *Magneto*, for the mighty *Galactus*, devourer of worlds , threatens to destroy the entire battleworld and all upon it!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ SECRET WARS™

ASSAULT ON GALACTUS!

IN A RUSTIC, ALIEN VILLAGE, THE X-MAN CALLED **COLOSSUS**, STILL RECOVERING FROM WOUNDS RECEIVED IN AN EARLY BATTLE, WITNESSES THE BEGINNING OF THE END...

LENIN'S BEARD! GALACTUS HAS BEGUN TO DEVOUR THE PLANET!

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I AM NOT AFRAID...EXCEPT FOR *ZSAJI!* IF THE END MUST COME, LET IT COME NOW, WHILE SHE LIES IN COMA-LIKE SLEEP!

ZSAJI! I DID NOT TRULY KNOW BEAUTY, NOBILITY AND SELFLESS COMPASSION UNTIL I MET YOU!

IS IT JUST THAT YOUR *HEALING TOUCH*--YOUR VERY LIFE-ENERGY FLOWING INTO MY BODY--LAID BARE THE DEPTHS OF MY SOUL TO YOU?

NO, I CANNOT BELIEVE THAT! EVEN WHEN FIRST I SAW YOU, SOMEHOW I KNEW THAT YOU WERE THE ONE IN ALL THE UNIVERSE I COULD TRULY LOVE!

AND YET...YOU LOVE ANOTHER!

STRANGE...BUT IT DOES NOT MATTER! I WANT NOTHING IN RETURN FOR MY LOVE--! IT IS NOT SOME--SOME COMMODITY TO BE BARTERED! I CARE ONLY THAT YOU ARE WELL AND HAPPY--IF IT MUST BE WITH ANOTHER...I AM CONTENT!

I GO TO FIGHT FOR YOUR LIFE ABOVE ALL, BELOVED ZSAJI!

AND LET HIM WHO WOULD THREATEN IT--EVEN GALACTUS HIMSELF--*BEWARE!*

*ENERGY CRACKLES AROUND HIS MUTANT BODY AND HIS FLESH BECOMES SUPPLE, LIVING **STEEL**--AND COLOSSUS STRIDES **TOWARD** HIS DESTINY!*

*MEANWHILE, HIGH ABOVE GALACTUS'S MOUNTAIN, BORNE ALOFT UPON TORNADO-FORCE WINDS, **STORM**, THE X-MEN'S MUTANT MISTRESS OF WEATHER SOARS...*

MENACING STORM CLOUDS GATHER AT HER SILENT BIDDING--

--AND AT HER COMMAND--

--THEIR FURY HAMMERS DOWN!

UNBELIEVABLE! HE'S STILL STANDIN'!

MOREOVER, WOLVERINE, HE SEEMED NOT TO NOTICE! IF WE CANNOT SO MUCH AS GAIN HIS *ATTENTION*...

SILENCE, MAGNETO! I SWORE TO CAPTAIN AMERICA THAT WE WOULD HOLD OUT AGAINST GALACTUS UNTIL HIS RETURN ...AND WE SHALL! WE *MUST!*

HENCEFORTH, WE ARE IN COMBAT COMMUNICATIONS MODE! I WILL GIVE ALL ORDERS TELEPATHICALLY! YOU MUST OBEY *INSTANTLY!*

ROGUE! TAKE TO THE AIR AND ATTACK AT ONCE!

NIGHTCRAWLER! CYCLOPS! FOLLOW UP ROGUE'S OFFENSIVE!

I'VE NEVER SEEN PROFESSOR X THIS-- THIS *INTENSE* BEFORE! IT'S BECAUSE HE *KNOWS* THIS IS SUICIDE!

AND I'LL BET HE KNEW ALL ALONG THAT IT WOULD COME DOWN TO THIS--! THAT'S WHY HE SEEMED COLDER, HARDER, MORE AUTHORITARIAN FROM THE MOMENT WE GOT HERE!

HE'D MELLOWED OUT SO MUCH IN THE LAST COUPLE YEARS-- IT WAS SORT OF A SHOCK! BUT IT MAKES SENSE NOW! IT MUST BE HARD TO SEND YOUR CHILDREN TO THEIR DEATHS!

SOMETHING HAS APPEARED OUT OF THIN AIR NEAR THE MACHINE! POSSIBLY A DEFENSIVE DRONE!

ROGUE! BE CAREFUL!

AH RECKON AH'M READY FOR ANYTHIN', STORM!

IF IT'S DANGEROUS, AH'D BEST TAKE IT ON FIRST! AH'M HARD TO HURT!

THWAKK!

ROGUE!

OOOFF!

GOT YOU!
THE MEREST TOY OF GALACTUS BLUNTS OUR OFFENSIVE--!
KEEP HAMMERING AT IT, MAGNETO!
PROFESSOR--!
BLAAAM!
DO NOT CONCERN YOURSELF WITH ME! ATTACK!
HE'LL LIVE! SKRAG THAT THING!
AH! I HAVE REACHED THIS-- THIS COSMIC FLYSWATTER!
BAMF!
NIGHTCRAWLER, NO! IT'S TOO DANGEROUS! TELEPORT YOUR BUTT BACK DOWN HERE, NOW!
NOT BEFORE I DISABLE ITS SENSORS!
EYAARRRGH!
ALL RIGHT, CHARLEY! HE BOUGHT US A CHANCE-- MAYBE WITH HIS LIFE! NOW WHAT?
MAGNETO! STAND READY--! CYCLOPS-- FULL-FORCE OPTIC BLAST--ON MY COMMAND... STRIKE!
AND, AT THAT INSTANT, IN THE VILLAGE, WHERE HAWKEYE, THE WASP, AND CAPTAIN MARVEL WAIT...
HOLEE--! THAT WAS LIKE A BABY NUKE! I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED?
I DON'T KNOW... BUT IF THAT WAS THE X-MEN UP THERE... THEY'RE DEAD FOR SURE!
SHOULD WE HEAD UP THERE NOW?
NO! WE'D BETTER WAIT FOR CAP... AND STRIKE AS A UNIT!

MEANWHILE, AT THE FORTRESS ONCE CALLED **DOOMBASE**, RECENTLY CONQUERED BY CAPTAIN AMERICA'S FORCES...

HURRY! NO TELLING HOW LONG THE X-MEN CAN HOLD OUT!

YEAH! WHERE'S THE REST OF THE ALPHABET WHEN YOU NEED IT?

NEVER MIND THAT! WHERE ARE CAPTAIN MARVEL AND HAWKEYE?

THEY WENT BACK TO THE VILLAGE EARLIER TO BRING THE WASP'S BODY HERE...FOR A DECENT BURIAL!

I HOPE THEY HAVE THE GOOD SENSE NOT TO ATTACK GALACTUS BEFORE WE ARRIVE!

HULK, MY FRIEND, ARE YOU UNWELL? T'WOULD SEEM THE GLOOM OF NIFFELHEIM HANGS IN THE AIR ABOUT YOU!

I'VE HAD BETTER DAYS...

IF 'TIS THAT YOU DO NOT FIT IN THESE CHAIRS THAT DEPRESSES YOU, COUNT YOURSELF FORTUNATE! THEY WERE MADE, I THINK, FOR INSECT MEN...OR BY TROLLS, FOR TORTURE!

IF 'TIS THE IMPENDING BATTLE TROUBLING THEE-- JUST THINK! WHAT GREATER CHANCE FOR GLORY HAS MAN OR GOD E'ER KNOWN?

MORE EVEN THAN RAGNAROK, THIS IS THE BATTLE I WAS BORN MILENNIA AGO TO FIGHT!

YOU, TOO, ARE A WARRIOR BORN, HULK! A TASTE OF BATTLE AND THE BERSERKER BATTLE-LUST SHALL RISE IN THY SOUL!

I DOUBT IT! I LOST THAT WHEN I GAINED THE INTELLIGENCE OF MY HUMAN SIDE-- BRUCE BANNER! AND NOW I'M SLOWLY LOSING THAT, TOO!

I'M NOT SAVAGE ENOUGH ...OR SMART ENOUGH TO BE A RELEVANT FACTOR!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT EVERYBODY'S WORRIED ABOUT! HOW CAN WE LOSE--? *I'M* HERE!

DO ME A FAVOR, TORCH! SHUT UP!

HERE WE ARE HEADIN' FOR THE BIG RUMBLE FOR ALL THE MARBLES AN' I AIN'T THE *THING!*

I'M USELESS! I FEEL LIKE I'M LETTIN' EVERYBODY DOWN--NOT TO MENTION THE WHOLE BLAMED UNIVERSE!

CHEER UP! AT LEAST YOU'RE BETTER LOOKING AS BEN GRIMM...WELL, A LITTLE, ANYWAY! C'MON! SMILE, OR I'LL GIVE YOU A HOTFOOT ON THE SEAT OF YOUR PANTIES!

BEAT IT, BRAT!

ON EARTH I CAN'T CHANGE BACK TO HUMAN AT ALL! WHY DO I HAVE TO DO IT HERE WHERE I'M NEEDED MOST AS THE THING?

AN' IF I *CAN* CHANGE BACK 'N' FORTH, WHY CAN'T I CONTROL IT--LIKE THE TORCH?

WHY?!

KRANG!

HEY! I'M THE *THING* AGAIN!

WHOOPIE! I'M THE *THING* AGAIN! I'M SO HAPPY, I EVEN LIKE *YOU!*

YEOW! YOU LUMMOX! PUT ME *DOWN!*

JEEZ, I CAN SEE THE HEADLINES --"AFFECTIONATE HUG SLAYS HUMAN TORCH EN ROUTE TO BATTLE-- UNIVERSE DESTROYED AS A RESULT"!

HMM...

THE NEW BROAD-- *SPIDER-WOMAN,* SHE CALLS HERSELF--SHE SURE IS WEIRD!

SHE'S AWFUL QUIET...DOES A LOT OF STARIN' AT FOLKS--! AND NEVER CRACKS A SMILE! SHE TURNED UP OUTTA NOWHERE... *CLAIMS* SHE'S ON OUR SIDE, BUT... MAYBE I'LL JUST KEEP AN EYE ON HER...

BESIDES... SHE'S GOT GREAT LEGS!

WE'VE GOT ONE THING IN COMMON-- WE'RE BOTH STRANGERS HERE!

A LOT OF GUYS HAVE WORKED WITH *IRON MAN* BEFORE-- BUT THAT WAS WHEN TONY STARK WAS IN THIS SUIT!

I THINK THEY'VE STARTED TO REALIZE THERE'S A DIFFERENT GUY IN HERE, NOW... AN' THEY GOT THEIR DOUBTS! THEY'RE KEEPIN' THEIR DISTANCE-- DON'T QUITE TRUST ME YET!

DON'T MATTER! AS LONG AS I GOT THIS ARMOR, I'M ONE BA-AD DUDE-- ESPECIALLY SINCE RICHARDS SOUPED IT UP!

AS SOON AS THAT FIGHT STARTS, I'LL SHOW 'EM-- SHOW 'EM *I'M* IRON MAN! THE *REAL* IRON MAN! JAMES RHODES IS IRON MAN-- NOW AND *FOREVER!*

YEAH...

HUH? SPIDER-MAN, YOU GONE *NUTS*, OR WHAT?

MEBBE HE JUST SORTA "FLIPPED OUT"... HEH, HEH!

YAHOO!

HEY, WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING, DOG-BREATH!

I'VE GOT MY WEBS BACK!

YOU FRUITCAKE! WATCH WHAT YOU'RE DOING!

I *AM!* AIN'T IT WONDERFUL?!

NO! WHERE'D YOU GET THIS STUFF? IT'S EVEN HARDER TO BURN OFF THAN YOUR OLD WEBBING!

WHICH WON'T KEEP ME FROM FRYING YOUR BUNS IN A MINUTE AFTER I GET IT OFF!

NYAH, NYAH!

SETTLE DOWN, SON! YOU, TOO, TORCH!

BUT, I'VE GOT *WEBS* AGAIN! EVER SINCE YOU CANNIBALIZED MY WEB-SHOOTERS TO REPAIR IRON-MAN'S ARMOR,* REED, I'VE FELT LIKE A ONE-ARMED MAN...OR A SEVEN-LEGGED SPIDER!

IT'S THE *COSTUME!* SOMEHOW, IT'S GOT BUILT-IN WEB-SHOOTERS! THEY FIRE WHEN I *THINK* ABOUT IT!

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THAT'S NOT ALL--! THIS SUIT DOES *ANYTHING!* WATCH THIS--!

THERE! SHORT SLEEVES FOR SUMMER!

I'D LOVE TO EXAMINE IT IN MY LAB SOMETIME ...IF THERE IS "SOMETIME" EVER AGAIN...IF I EVER SEE MY LAB AGAIN!

LISTEN TO ME! I SOUND LIKE A DEFEATIST--! I APOLOGIZE!

YOU CERTAINLY SEEM CHIPPER CONSIDERING WHAT WE'RE ABOUT TO FACE!

YEAH...WELL, REED, WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT, THIS WHOLE TRIP BOGGLES MY MIND...SO I'VE GIVEN UP PONDERING THE IMPONDERABLES!

I HAVE TROUBLE UNDERSTANDING *MODERN ART!* WHO CAN FIGURE ALL THIS ULTRA-COSMIC STUFF? I'M JUST TAKING IT AS IT COMES!

AND WHAT ABOUT ME? CAN I SIMPLY TAKE IT AS IT COMES?

NO...I CAN'T HELP "PONDERING THE IMPONDERABLES"...SEARCHING FOR MEANING IN ALL THIS! I KEEP HEARING THE *BEYONDER'S* WORDS ECHOING IN MY MIND...

I AM FROM BEYOND!

SLAY YOUR ENEMIES AND ALL YOU DESIRE SHALL BE YOURS!

NOTHING YOU DREAM OF IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO ACCOMPLISH!

AT FACE VALUE, THE WHOLE THING IS *ABSURD!* WHY WOULD A BEING SO FAR REMOVED FROM US AND SO POWERFUL AS THE BEYONDER BRING US ACROSS THE UNIVERSE FOR A STUPID, SIMPLISTIC "GOOD-VERSUS-EVIL" GLADIATORIAL CONTEST? IS HE A MAD GOD? A COSMIC IDIOT?

AND WHY *US?* WHY THIS ODD COLLECTION OF BEINGS, MOSTLY FROM EARTH? AND WHY *GALACTUS?* HE DOESN'T *FIT!* HUMAN BEINGS AND EVEN *GODS* MAY BE TEMPTED, BUT GALACTUS IS A *FORCE OF NATURE*--NO MORE CAPABLE OF HAVING ENEMIES THAN A HURRICANE OR AN EARTHQUAKE! WHY IS *HE* HERE?

THERE MUST BE MORE TO THIS... BUT WHAT POSSIBLE PURPOSE COULD THERE BE?

I THINK GALACTUS MUST BE THE KEY!

REED! HEADS UP!

KRRRRAKK!

WE'VE BEEN HIT!

I'M ACTIVATING THE AUTO-STABILIZERS AND THE RETROS--BUT WE'RE TOO *LOW!*

BRACE FOR CRASH LANDING!

BUT...

UHHNGH!

THOOM!

IT'S *COLOSSUS!* HE BUFFERED OUR LANDING!

LOOKS LIKE HE AGGRAVATED HIS INJURIES IN THE PROCESS!

NYET! *NO!* I AM ÷UHH... ALL RIGHT!

YOU'RE GOING TO *HAVE* TO BE ALL RIGHT, SON! WE'LL NEED YOUR STRENGTH! IT'S DO OR DIE, NOW!

GALACTUS'S MACHINE IS SENDING OUT POWER-TENDRILS TO RIP THE PLANET APART BEFORE REDUCING IT TO BASIC BIO-SPHERIC ENERGY!

ONE OF THOSE MUST'VE NICKED OUR SHIP!

WE HAVE ONLY SECONDS BEFORE THE *WORLD-BURN* STARTS!

THAT CRATER--! FROM THE EXPLOSION I SAW ON MY WAY HERE! DID...THE X-MEN *DIE* THERE?

LET'S *GO!*

I--I WANT TO DO NOTHING BUT SEARCH FOR THEM-- YET I CANNOT! I MUST NOT-- FOR THE SAKE OF THE *LIVING!* FOR ZSAJI!

HO! *CAPTAIN MARVEL!*

CAREFUL WITH THESE DEFENSE DRONES! I THINK ONE OF THEM BLEW UP HERE BEFORE, AFTER IT WAS DAMAGED!

NOW SHE TELLS ME!

CONCENTRATE ON *AVOIDING* THEM! GET PAST THEM AND ATTACK THE WORLD-DEVOURING APPARATUS!

THAT'S A CINCH WITH MY NEW RADAR AND IN-FLIGHT DODGING COMPUTERS!

KA-BLAAMM!

AWWRIIIGHT!

IRON MAN GOT *THROUGH!* HE DAMAGED THE MACHINE! INCREDIBLE... BEYOND BELIEF--! WE...HAVE A CHANCE! WE *CAN WIN!*

WAIT--! THAT'S THE ANSWER! THAT'S IT!

WE'VE GOT THE ADVANTAGE! LET'S PRESS IT! COME *ON!*

I CAN'T WAIT TO GET MY MITTS ON THAT SUCKER!

NO! *NO! STOP!*

WHAT? WHATTAYA MEAN, "NO! STOP!"?

BEN, WE CAN'T GO THROUGH WITH THIS! AT LAST I SEE A PURPOSE HERE--A MEANING TO THE UNIVERSE FOR THIS INSANE CONFLICT!

WE MUST NOT STOP GALACTUS!

SUDDENLY...

YEOWW!

A WAVE OF SHEER FORCE! HE'S HURLING US BACK LIKE SO MANY LEAVES IN THE WIND!

COME UP READY, REGROUP, AND RENEW THE ATTACK!

ALL RIGHT, LET'S...

NO, WAIT! WHY DON'TCHA WANT US TO FIGHT, REED?

WHAT?!

CAN'T YOU SEE THAT WE'VE ALREADY DAMAGED HIS MACHINE? WE'VE DONE THE *IMPOSSIBLE!* THAT MEANS THIS FIGHT ISN'T HOPELESS! *WE CAN WIN--!*

--WHICH IS PRECISELY WHY WE MUST NOT FIGHT! WE MUST *LET GALACTUS WIN!*

WHAT ARE YOU *TALKING* ABOUT? YOU'RE NOT MAKING SENSE, REED!

I'M MAKING PERFECT SENSE! FOR THE FIRST TIME THIS WHOLE THING MAKES SOME SENSE TO ME! I SEE A POSSIBLE PURPOSE IN IT!

THIS IS A CHANCE TO RID OUR UNIVERSE OF THE THREAT OF GALACTUS! ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS LET HIM *WIN* THIS CONTEST! IF THE BEYONDER INDEED, GRANTS HIS WISH, HE'LL BE FREED OF HIS PLANET-CONSUMING *HUNGER* AT LONG LAST!

AND IF THE BEYONDER RENEGES?

RE-ENERGIZED BY CONSUMING THIS WORLD, GALACTUS WILL ATTACK-- I KNOW IT! AND FORCE THE BEYONDER TO PAY UP--OR BE DESTROYED IN THE ATTEMPT. ANY WAY YOU LOOK AT IT...THE UNIVERSE WINS!

COUNTLESS BILLIONS WHO *WOULD* HAVE EVENTUALLY FALLEN PREY TO GALACTUS--WILL LIVE IN PEACE!

YEAH, BUT WHY US? WHY WERE *WE* PICKED TO DECIDE THE FATE OF THE UNIVERSE?

WHY *NOT* US? WE PICKED OURSELVES, REMEMBER? BESIDES... WE BEINGS OF EARTH SEEM TO HAVE A KNACK FOR BEING PIVOTAL IN THE COSMIC SCHEME OF THINGS.

STRETCHO... YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?

YES, BEN!

REED, I--I'LL DO WHAT YOU TELL ME, BUT... I MEAN...

REED! HE'S *VANISHING!*

HE'S GONE! AND SO'S GALACTUS! AND THE WHOLE DARN MOUNTAINTOP!

NOW WHAT, CAP?

I--I DON'T KNOW... BUT FOR ONCE I'M OPEN TO SUGGESTIONS!

AT THAT MOMENT, SEVERAL MILLION MILES FROM THE SURFACE OF THE BATTLE PLANET, IN THE AWESOME, SOLAR-SYSTEM-SIZED CONSTRUCT THAT IS THE **HOMEWORLD OF GALACTUS**--

--A MORTAL MAN, YET ONE UNLIKE ALL OTHERS, GAZES IN WIDE-EYED WONDER...

IT IS... BEYOND THE CAPACITY OF HUMAN SENSES TO REPORT ...AND THE MIND TO GRASP!

IT PULSES WITH LIFE... WITH LIVING SPLENDOR! MOUNTAINS... SEAS... FORESTS... A WORLD OF INCONCEIVABLE VISTAS OF BEAUTY... *BUILT*... NOT CREATED! I AM... OVERWHELMED!

WELCOME TO MY HOME, REED RICHARDS!

I AM HONORED TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED BY GALACTUS!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO VIEW YOUR HOME?

YES! YES, I WOULD! VERY MUCH!

THERE!

SUE! AND LITTLE FRANKLIN! I MISS THEM! I SEE SHE HASN'T HAD THE BABY YET!

NO.

LISTEN TO ME, REED RICHARDS... AND THINK WELL ON MY WORDS...

MEANWHILE, IN A MAXIMUM SECURITY CONTAINMENT INSIDE WHAT WAS ONCE HIS OWN FORTRESS, DOCTOR DOOM SITS UNMOVING, AS IF TURNED TO STONE!

NOT LONG AGO, HE DARED TO INVADE THE HOMEWORLD OF GALACTUS SEEKING KNOWLEDGE, POWER, OPPORTUNITY--A WAY TO CONQUER GALACTUS, AND PERHAPS THE BEYONDER AS WELL...

BUT GALACTUS DISCOVERED HIM AND EXPELLED HIM--HARSHLY--REDUCING A ONCE MIGHTY FIGURE TO A TATTERED, CHARRED RUIN...

...OR SO IT SEEMED--UNTIL NOW...

THE WORLD SHIP IS THE WAY!

GALACTUS'S HOME ITSELF IS THE WAY I SEEK! AT LAST, I SEE!

I MUST BE FREE--! AT ONCE! BEFORE OPPORTUNITY EVADES MY GRASP!

MY ARMOR'S POWER IS DRAINED--THUS THEY LEFT IT ON ME--ALSO FEARING, PERHAPS THE MANY BOOBY TRAPS AWAITING ANY WHO WOULD DARE ATTEMPT REMOVE IT!

BUT DOOM IS EVER PREPARED! I NEED ONLY ACTIVATE MY POINT-SINGULARITY POWER SUPPLY--

--AND AGAIN I WIELD POWER!

KA-BOOOM!

DOOM! DOOM, FREE US!

DOOM!

I HAVE NO USE FOR YOU NOW...SAVE ONE!

KLAW! KLAW, MAD MASTER OF SOUND, BEING OF LIVING SOUND-ENERGY, WHOM I FOUND IN GALACTUS'S HOME! YOU ARE THE ONE I NEED!

MOI? TRA-LA-LA-LA-LA!

YOU NARRATE YOUR LIFE AS YOU GO ALONG, DON'T YOU? ARE YOU BEING TAPED?

WHY, YES! EVERY UTTERANCE OF DOOM MUST BE RECORDED FOR POSTERITY!

YOU, YOURSELF, KLAW, ARE A "RECORDING" OF SORTS, DUE TO THE TIME YOU SPENT AS A WAVE OF VIBRATORY ENERGY COURSING THROUGH THE WALLS OF GALACTUS'S HOMEWORLD! COME WITH ME!

WHERE TO? TOODLE-OO, TOODLE-OO!

TO THE LAB! I'M GOING TO DISSECT YOU!

OH, GOOD!

MEANWHILE...

I WILL NOT GIVE UP HOPE ÷UHH÷... UNTIL I FIND THEIR BODIES! IF THEY ARE DEAD THERE MUST BE SOME EVIDENCE! I WILL SEARCH TILL I DROP!

SUDDENLY...

CHZAKT!

AN OPTIC BLAST! CYCLOPS!

YOU'RE ALIVE! ALIVE!

AH RECKON SO!

GOOD! I WAS TIRED OF DIGGING!

AND...

BECAUSE OF THE ENORMOUS ENERGY IT APPARENTLY CONTAINED, WE SUSPECTED THAT THE FLYSWATTER MIGHT EXPLODE WHEN I BLASTED IT--

--SO MAGNETO PULLED A THICK LAYER OF EARTH AND STONE OVERTOP OF US FOR PROTECTION!

THE BLAST STILL VERY NEARLY KILLED US!

AND NOW--?

CAPTAIN AMERICA'S PEOPLE HAVE RETURNED TO THE VILLAGE! WE'LL DO THE SAME!

SOON...

SO ZSAJI APPARENTLY SAVED ME! I THINK IT TOOK A *LOT* OUT OF HER THOUGH!

AMAZING!

LOOKS LIKE THE X-MEN SURVIVED AFTER ALL!

MAKING ANOTHER ARROW, HAWKEYE?

ONE LAST ONE... WITH GALACTUS'S NAME ON IT!

ZSAJI! SHE HAS AWAKENED! THANK THE STARS!

ZSAJI!

JAH-NEE! JAH-NEE!

OH...ZSAJI! LOOK, I'M KIND OF BUSY NOW! LATER, HUH? I--I'M JUST TOO WORRIED ABOUT REED TO DEAL WITH ANY-THING ELSE RIGHT NOW, OKAY?

SHE DON'T UNDERSTAND THE WORDS, KIDDO, BUT I THINK SHE READS YA!

WE COULD JUST STAND READY UNTIL GALACTUS APPEARS AGAIN...

IF HE DOES! WHAT IF HE DECIDES TO WAIT A FEW MONTHS? TIME IS NOTHING TO HIM!

WHY DON'T WE GET SOME SPACEWORTHY VESSELS FROM DOOMBASE AND MOUNT AN ASSAULT ON HIS HOMEWORLD?

LISSEN UP, LADLES AND GERMS! REED SAID NOT TO FIGHT GALACTUS, SO WE AIN'T GONNA! AN' THAT'S THAT! RIGHT, TORCH?

WELL, I GUESS, BEN, BUT... GEE...

I AIN'T HERE TO DIE SITTIN' ON MY HANDS, GRIMM!

YEAH? WELL, I CAN ARRANGE FOR YOU TO...

HELLO, EVERYBODY!

REED!

STRETCH! WHAT HAPPENED?

NOT MUCH! WE HAD TEA...

HE TOLD ME THAT I WAS A "FORCE OF THE UNIVERSE" JUST AS HE IS--! THAT I'M A "UNIVERSAL CHAMPION OF LIFE" JUST AS HE IS AN INSTRUMENT OF DEATH! AND, HE SHOWED ME SUE AND FRANKLIN...

AND THE KID--?

WELL...SUE HASN'T DELIVERED YET! SHE LOOKED FINE...BUT HE DIDN'T SAY MUCH ABOUT THE BABY!

UH...I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT ALL ADDS UP TO, BUT WHATEVER YOU SAY, WE'RE WITH YOU, STRETCHO! RIGHT, KID?

YEAH, BUT, REED, I HOPE YOU...

HE MEANS, "RIGHT"!

THANKS, BEN... JOHNNY!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY! I'M MORE CONVINCED THAN EVER THAT IT'S RIGHT TO LET GALACTUS DO WHAT HE *MUST!*

AND IF I'M A "CHAMPION OF LIFE!" DOES IT NOT MAKE SENSE TO ALLOW GALACTUS TO SLAY US SO THAT COUNTLESS BILLIONS WILL LIVE?

OR WAS HE TELLING ME THAT I *MUST* FIGHT TO PRESERVE EVEN THESE RELATIVELY FEW LIVES HERE? I JUST DON'T KNOW...

ONE LESS ORANGE MONSTER AIN'T GONNA MATTER MUCH TO THE UNIVERSE, REED! DON'T WORRY ABOUT CHAMPIONIN' MY LIFE!

SO...WE AIN'T FIGHTIN'--OR AT LEAST NOT TILL REED SAYS SO! READ ME?

THIS IS A REAL CROCK! WE'VE *GOT* TO FIGHT!

QUITTERS! *COWARDS!*

COME HERE AN' SAY THAT! AIN'T NO HEAVY, COSMIC REASON SAYS I CAN'T BUST *YOUR* HEAD!

WHY, YOU--!

HEY, *LOOK!* GALACTUS IS BACK! IT'S STARTING AGAIN!

ALL RIGHT, LISTEN UP! *I'M* GOING TO FIGHT! THE REST OF YOU COME OR NOT AS YOUR CONSCIENCE DICTATES!

WE'RE WITH YOU, CAP!

GOOD! BUT FIRST...

I JUST WANT TO TELL YOU, PROFESSOR XAVIER, THAT DESPITE OUR DIFFERENCES, YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE DID US--AND THE UNIVERSE, AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED -- A GREAT SERVICE, EARLIER!

IT WAS AN HONOR!

I HOPE YOU, THE X-MEN... AND MAGNETO WILL COME AND FIGHT SIDE BY SIDE WITH US NOW! NO ONE HERE WILL DENY YOU'VE EARNED THAT MUCH!

ENOUGH TALK! LET'S *GO!*

THANK YOU!

MOMENTS LATER, AT DOOMBASE...

THE BATTLE AGAINST GALACTUS YET RAGES! EXCELLENT! THERE IS STILL *TIME!*

AND THE BEYONDER HAS OPENED HIS *PORTAL* AGAIN-- PERHAPS TO MORE CLOSELY OBSERVE WHAT TRANSPIRES, SENSING THE AWESOME SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEXT FEW MOMENTS!

PERFECT!

BUT, I MUST WORK QUICKLY! THE DISSECTION MUST BE COMPLETED AND MY APPARATUS ASSEMBLED IN MERE MINUTES!

DOCTOR *DOOM'S* DISSECTING *ROOM!* DOOM! OOM, OOM, OOM...

CUTTING DOESN'T HURT WHEN YOU'RE MADE OF SOLIDIFIED SOUND! IT TINGLES! INGLES, INGLES, INGLES...

MAY I SPEAK POETRY INTO YOUR TAPE RECORDER, DOOOOOM?

"BELLS" BY POE! "...THE TINTINABULATIONS OF THE BELLS, BELLS, BELLS, AND THE RINGING AND THE SINGING OF THE BELLS..." *WHEEEE!*

ELSEWHERE...

ONWARD! ONWARD!

HE'S FIGHTING US DIRECTLY NOW! NO MORE DRONES!

I THINK THAT'S A GOOD SIGN--!

ON THE *OTHER* HAND...

MAYBE HE IS WEAKENING -- BUT HE'S STILL NO PUSHOVER!

NEITHER IS THE *HULK!* I'M GETTING SICK OF THIS...

I'M GOING TO *SMASH* HIM ONCE AND FOR ALL!

NOW, BIG MAN, YOU -- *AHHH!*

HULK!

SUDDENLY...

TORCH! BEFORE HE CAN FINISH THE HULK--! HIT HIM!

FWHOOSH!!

BEN! START TO UNDERCUT THE MOUNTAIN! SEVER THE ANCHOR RODS AND PROBE WANDS SUNK INTO THE ROCK FROM THAT MACHINE!

CONSIDER 'EM SEVERED, BIG BRAIN!

GALACTUS USED ENORMOUS AMOUNTS OF ENERGY TRANSPORTING HIS HOMEWORLD HERE--AND I'M SURE HE HASN'T FED FOR MONTHS! HIS POWER IS ALMOST DEPLETED! WE CAN *TAKE* HIM!

RICHARDS, I-- I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE-- BUT WHAT MADE YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND?

I...THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT GALACTUS SAID--AND I'M STILL NOT CERTAIN THAT, IN THE COSMIC SCHEME OF THINGS, WHAT WE'RE DOING IS RIGHT--

--BUT I REALIZED JUST HOW BADLY I WANT TO SEE MY BABY BORN, CAP! I WANT THAT MORE THAN ANYTHING--!

AND I'M GOING TO *FIGHT* FOR IT!

IRON MAN! HIT HIM HEAD ON! YOUR ARMOR CAN WITHSTAND THOSE ION BEAMS HE'S PROJECTING!

ROGUE! GO IN AFTER HIM! HIT HIGH --BUT WATCH FOR ENERGY BEAMS FROM HIS EYES!

SPIDER-MAN! GET BEHIND HIM!

BEN! THOR! CLOSE IN, QUICKLY! HURRY!

GOT HIM!

BUDOOM!

YOW! THAT WAS CLOSE!

THE WAY TO HIS MACHINE IS CLEAR!

LET'S TRASH IT!

AYE! FOR GLORY! FOR VICTORY!

NO! NO! LEAVE THE MACHINE ALONE! GET GALACTUS! CAPTURE HIM! DISABLE HIM IF YOU MUST!

HE MUST NOT ESCAPE!

WHA--?

HURRY!

TOO LATE! HE'S GETTING AWAY!

HE-- HE'S GONE! WE FAILED!

SO WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL, REED?

YEAH! WE TRASHED HIS MACHINE AND DROVE HIM OFF! WE *WON*, MAN!

NO! WE *LOST!*

LET ME EXPLAIN--! RIGHT ABOUT NOW--

"--GALACTUS IS ENTERING HIS WORLD-SHIP!

"HE'LL PROBABLY TAKE A MOMENT TO LOOK AROUND... HIS *LAST* LOOK!

"YOU SEE, HE DOESN'T *NEED* THIS MACHINE TO DEVOUR A WORLD! IT JUST MAKES THE ENERGY ABSORPTION FAR MORE *EFFICIENT!*

"UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I'M SURE HE'LL MAKE DO WITHOUT...

"AH! I SEE IT'S *BEGINNING--!*

"HE'S DEVOURING HIS OWN LIVING WORLD-- PERHAPS THE GREATEST ENERGY SOURCE IN THE UNIVERSE!

"MOMENTS AFTER HE'S FINISHED, THIS GODFORSAKEN PLANET WILL BE NEXT! WE WON'T BE ABLE TO STOP HIM THIS TIME! THEN HE'LL PROBABLY CONSUME THE SUN, TOO! HE'LL WANT EVERY IOTA OF ENERGY AVAILABLE IN CASE HE MUST DO BATTLE WITH THE BEYONDER!

"WE'RE DEAD MEN!"

ENERGY BEYOND KEN SEETHES IN THE VOID--
AND THE SUN SEEMS DIM BY COMPARISON!

IN THE CENTER OF THE NIMBUS OF FUNDAMENTAL FORCE, GALACTUS PREPARES TO DRINK IN THE POWER COSMIC...

BUT, AT DOOMBASE...

NOW!

NOW, KLAW--! THESE LENSES I'VE FASHIONED FROM YOUR BODY, SO PERFECTLY, SINGULARLY ATTUNED TO THE ENERGY OF THE WORLD-SHIP WILL *STEAL* THE POWER--

--AND DRAW IT HERE, TO *DOOM!*

DOOM! OOM, OOM, OOM...

TO BE CONTINUED...

SON OF ULTRON